

Mr. Speaker, I urge the President to reject the calls from one narrow interest group for favoritism and to support fair and open competition. Imposing this discriminatory Executive order would be a disservice to working men and women, to the American taxpayer, and to the economy.

WOMEN AND INFANT CARE PROGRAM SHOULD NOT BE CUT

(Mr. FLAKE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to give major consideration to a program that I think is one of America's finest, and that is the women and infant care program, which I understand that many are talking about cutting.

When we talk about a Nation where infant mortality is at such a high rate that it compares very favorably to many Third World countries, it seems to me that a program that addresses the needs of pregnant women, children before and after birth, ought not be one that we ought to be using the budget knife to slice.

In reality, when we talk about what America is all about, it would seem to me our primary interest ought to be in the protection of our babies and our children, and clearly one of the best programs that we have that addresses that concern is the Women and Infant Care Program.

I think if we talk about budget cuts with WIC, we lose the opportunity to provide for milk, the bread and all of the other necessities for the nutrition of these young children, and in doing so, I think it represents a blight on America.

I would hope that committees that are giving consideration to budget cuts in this area would reconsider and think more favorably about a program that is doing what it was intended to do, and that is meet the needs of our infants and our pregnant mothers.

THE SPIRIT OF VOLUNTARISM IS STILL ALIVE AND WELL

(Ms. DUNN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks and include extraneous material.)

Ms. DUNN. Mr. Speaker, when Alexis de Toqueville came to America in the spring of 1831, there were many aspects of American life that deeply impressed him. One of the aspects of American life that impressed him the most was the spirit of voluntarism that he encountered everywhere he went.

Mr. Speaker, that spirit of voluntarism is still alive and well today. In fact, I believe that voluntarism is part of the American character. That is why I am so distressed to see that the spirit of voluntarism is threatened these days by a legal system that allows all sorts

of lawsuits to be filed against innocent people who volunteer their time to serve others.

Mr. Speaker, too many volunteers are put on trial by those who are manipulating our legal system and that must stop. That is why we must pass H.R. 911, the Volunteer Protection Act. Volunteers who act in good faith, who are engaged in acts of charity should not be threatened by absurd lawsuits.

Let us pass H.R. 911 and strengthen the unique American spirit of voluntarism.

WHITE HOUSE TURNS THE OTHER CHEEK ON CHINA'S ACTIONS

(Mr. TRAFICANT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, China denies American products and the White House turns the other cheek. China smuggles AK-47's into America and the White House turns the other cheek. China sells missiles to Iran, the White House turns the other cheek. China even threatened to use nuclear force against Taiwan. The White House turns the other cheek.

And after all this, the White House still wants to grant most-favored-nation trade status to China.

Beam me up here. Evidently, the White House will not learn a lesson till one of those Communist Chinese missiles hits them right smack in the middle of their other cheeks. Think about that one, ladies and gentlemen. We are, in fact, financing the next major national security threat to our Nation.

MEDICARE TRUSTEES' REPORT

(Mr. KINGSTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, a little over 2 years ago, on April 3, 1995, the Medicare trustees, who are appointed by President Clinton and other folks, but it is a bipartisan committee, they came out with their report, and the trustees' report 2 years ago said Medicare was going to be bankrupt, the Congress was under an obligation to move to protect and preserve and strengthen Medicare.

At that time, the Congress passed two plans to protect, preserve, and strengthen Medicare on a bipartisan basis and increase funding per beneficiary from about \$5,200 to \$7,100. There was no cut.

Unfortunately, politics being politics, this was demagogued and eventually vetoed by the President of the United States. The senior citizens of America deserve more. Today those same trustees will come out with yet another report, and it will say one more time that Medicare is going to go bankrupt in the year 2002.

In 1995, when the report first came out, Medicare was losing \$22 million a

day. Today it is losing about \$36 million a day. Our seniors, my grandmother, my mom, my dad, your grandmother, your mom and dad, they deserve more. It is time for us to work on a bipartisan basis to save Medicare, not just for the next election, but for the next generation.

EDUCATION STANDARDS

(Mr. ETHERIDGE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, nothing is more important to the future of our American families, our communities, and our economy than the success of our public schools. In North Carolina, we have proven that over the last 8 years that if you want to make great strides in public education, you can do it through innovation, high standards, and good old-fashioned hard work.

I rise today to urge this Congress to take aggressive action to support excellence in our public schools. North Carolina has proven that by challenging our people to become the best, we bring out their best efforts. This Congress must take the same approach by providing the necessary tools to equip our young people to provide for quality education for every child in every point and every place in America for those that are willing to work.

Mr. Speaker, I will soon introduce legislation to support voluntary standards in our States to provide for higher standards. We must measure our progress and chart our future to a better America. I urge my colleagues to join me in the support of this legislation.

SAVING MEDICARE

(Mr. BOB SCHAFFER of Colorado asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BOB SCHAFFER of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, today is an important day for my grandmother and my wife's grandmother and for many of the seniors that I have had a chance to meet over the last several years in my short career in politics. Today is important to them because this afternoon the Medicare trustees will meet and finally release the annual trustee report.

This is a body of trustees appointed by the President. If recent trends hold true, the Medicare trust fund will be bankrupt within 4 or 5 years; and when that happens, all of these seniors will lose their hospital coverage. My grandmother and my wife's grandmother asked me to promise them during the course of my campaign that I would not let that occur, and I aim to maintain that promise and uphold it.

For 2 years, the Republicans have been fighting to save the trust fund. Our plan would actually increase Medicare spending by an average of 7½ percent per year from the \$5,200 per recipient today to \$7,100 by the year 2002.

That rate of responsible growth is what is needed to, in fact, maintain the solvency of the trust fund.

We also intend to offer choices and to restore the patient-physician relationship that has been lost by a large government, third-party payer system, which is going bankrupt unless we act now to save it.

I urge my colleagues on the other side and the White House, as well, to join us in the effort.

TAX BREAKS FOR WEALTHY IS WRONG PRIORITY

(Mr. ALLEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, Republicans are demanding an additional \$10 to \$30 billion in Medicare cuts. Why? Not to extend the life of the Medicare part A trust fund, not to improve the program for the 38 million seniors and disabled who depend on it. No, the additional cuts proposed by the majority are needed to fund tax breaks for the wealthy.

The new crown jewel, costing \$300 billion over the next 5 years, involves eliminating all estate and capital gains taxes. Some tax relief makes sense, but only after we balance the Federal budget and invest in our future.

Tax breaks for the wealthy are the wrong priority for this Congress. Our children must be our top priority. Children's health insurance, quality, affordable child care, improved education, and confronting drug and alcohol abuse, that is the heart of our future and ought to be part of our budget.

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REPUBLICAN AGENDA TO ADDRESS CHILD ABUSE

(Mr. EWING asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. EWING. Mr. Speaker, I come here today to talk about part of the Republican agenda. Yesterday I was in a news conference with the gentlewoman from New York [Ms. MOLINARI], the Speaker of the House, the gentleman from Texas [Mr. DELAY], and others from our side talking about legislation to help protect abused children.

One of the points that came out so clearly in that legislative proposal and those who testified was that drugs and alcohol are one of the biggest causes of child abuse in America. I think, of course, of child abuse as symptomatic of the problems with our society and that is an enormous challenge that will take years to meet. But there are things we can do now. We can stop drugs from entering America. We can do a better job of it. We can beef up our border patrols. I hope that they are

doing a good job. If they are not, we ought to be investigating. We can use the best equipment to detect those bringing drugs into America. We are not doing enough. It is time that we recognized how high these stakes are and do our very best.

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS UNDER ATTACK

(Mr. HINCHEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HINCHEY. Mr. Speaker, one of the most important aspects of the foundation upon which this Republic is based is freedom of the press. That freedom unfortunately is under attack by the majority in this House. Two days ago, the Speaker of the House of Representatives addressing the Georgia Chamber of Commerce called upon the advertisers in America's newspapers to attempt to influence the quality and character of news as it is being recorded by the free press in this country. This comes upon the heels of the blatant attack during the last Congress to influence in an outrageous way public broadcasting, both television and radio, in this country by cutting back on their funds. Freedom of the press is critically important to the future of this country and to the freedoms that are possessed by all Americans. That freedom is under attack by this Speaker. I call upon the majority Members in this House to repudiate those remarks of the Speaker and to reaffirm that this House stands solidly behind the right of the free press in this country to report the news as it sees fit, not based upon the advertisers that advertise in those newspapers.

PROJECT LABOR AGREEMENTS

(Mr. FAWELL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. FAWELL. Mr. Speaker, the Clinton administration is expected to issue an Executive order regarding the use of what is called "project labor agreements" for all Federal and federally funded construction projects. This proposal is anticompetitive, it is discriminatory, and it is just basically unfair since nonunion construction companies will not be eligible to bid on Federal and federally funded construction projects.

The proposed order appears to be yet another attempt by the President to change or affect Federal laws by executive fiat rather than through the normal legislative process.

Mr. Speaker, this is a matter of basic American fairness. Republicans and Democrats alike should be concerned about this proposed Executive order. Bids to perform Government work should be based on sound, credible criteria such as quality of work, experience, and cost, not union affiliation and not whether the bidder is a union

or nonunion construction company. President Clinton's initiative is unfair and discriminatory and goes in the opposite direction of fair and merit-based competition. It will exacerbate already strained relations between management and labor in this Nation and between the Congress and the administration. I would implore the President to reconsider his intentions here.

MEDICARE

(Mr. WYNN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WYNN. Mr. Speaker, one of the things that most frustrates the American public is the failure of Congress to address the Nation's real business. Today the trustees of the Medicare system will make a report and talk about the real business, and that business is the problem of our Medicare trust fund going bankrupt in about the year 2002.

The question then becomes what are we going to do about it? Or, rather, what is the Republican majority going to do about it? We believe that we can make prudent cuts and achieve savings that will solve this problem. The President has put that proposal out on the table. We can adjust it and avoid this bankruptcy. The question becomes, what does the Republican majority want to do? So far, their crown jewel is not solving Medicare but providing tax breaks that basically benefit the wealthy. The tax breaks that they have talked about amount to \$300 billion over 5 years. Who gets that \$300 billion in tax breaks? Not the average American. Rather, the richest 5 percent, people who make over \$100,000 a year.

My suggestion is this: Let us not give those big tax breaks, let us put the crown jewel back in the drawer, let us address the Nation's real business which is solving the Medicare problem. We can do that without giving tax breaks to the wealthy, and that is what we ought to do. Take care of the Nation's business.

MEDICARE IS LIVING BEYOND ITS MEANS

(Mr. GUTKNECHT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, as my colleagues have said so far this morning, today the Medicare trustees' report will be unveiled. Unfortunately, we all know what it is going to say. It is going to say that bankruptcy is closing in. That is the bad news.

For 2 years now Medicare part A, the trust fund, has been spending more than it takes in. Medicare is living beyond its means and is rapidly depleting any surplus that it may have built up. That is the bad news.

The good news is that we have a plan to protect the trust fund. We can simplify the complicated billing and paperwork. We can offer seniors a choice and